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Programme planning

Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2011

Part two: biennial programme plan

Programme 21
Palestine refugees

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* A/63/50.

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Overall orientation

21.1 The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) was established as a separate entity within the United Nations system and as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly by resolution 302 (IV), from which UNRWA derives its mandate to provide continued assistance to the Palestine refugees. Since starting operations in 1950, UNRWA has adapted and enhanced its programmes to meet the increasingly complex needs of refugees and to provide them with a measure of stability amid chronic conflict in the region, within available resources. It stands ready to continue to do so during the biennium 2010-2011 in accordance with the triennial mandate it receives from the Assembly.

21.2 UNRWA reports directly to the General Assembly. Overall review of UNRWA programmes and activities is undertaken by the 23-member Advisory Commission, which includes representatives of the Agency's major donors and host Governments. In its resolution 3331 B (XXIX), the Assembly decided that, with effect from 1 January 1975, the expenses relating to the emoluments of international staff in the service of UNRWA, which would otherwise have been charged to voluntary contributions, should be financed by the regular budget of the United Nations for the duration of the Agency's mandate.

21.3 The strategic objectives of UNRWA for the biennium 2010-2011 are to promote the best possible levels of human development of the refugees consistent with internationally agreed goals and the standards in the region where they reside.

21.4 UNRWA aims to achieve its objectives by maintaining and improving the provision of education and health services, relief and social support, and microfinance loans to registered Palestine refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a population that is projected to reach 4.8 million by 2010.

21.5 Since 2000, the Agency has provided emergency assistance to refugees in acute distress as a result of international and internal conflict, humanitarian access restrictions and prolonged economic hardship in the occupied Palestinian territory and Lebanon. This emergency assistance programme reaches more than 1.4 million refugees annually. UNRWA will continue to provide such services as necessary, as well as, on an exceptional basis, as mandated in General Assembly resolution 2252 (ES-V), services to non-refugees in serious need of immediate assistance.

21.6 During the biennium 2010-2011, UNRWA seeks to make further progress in strengthening its management and service delivery through its organizational development programme, through which the Agency is enhancing its capacity to plan, implement and evaluate its services to the refugees, expand outreach to non-traditional donors and to further enhance accountability to its stakeholders. UNRWA will also continue its efforts to mainstream gender and meet the needs of refugee children and those with disabilities, and to develop further the Agency's protection responses, thereby bringing UNRWA closer to fulfilling its obligations vis-à-vis the directives of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General, international human rights law, the Beijing Platform for Action, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

21.7 The Agency, which is almost entirely dependent on voluntary funding to implement its programmes, has contended not only with chronic funding shortfalls, but also with more sudden, politically induced funding uncertainties. It will continue to seek the additional resources it needs to improve the quality of services it provides to the refugees, while maintaining cost-conscious management and the operational flexibility required to respond to unforeseen disruptions to lives and livelihoods in Palestine refugee communities.

Subprogramme 1
Education

Objective of the Organization: To meet the basic educational and training needs of Palestine refugees, in particular children and youth, and to improve their educational and employment opportunities.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved quality of education provided to the Palestine refugee population at all levels and increased coverage	(a) (i) Reduction in the drop-out rate for pupils in the elementary education cycle (ii) Reduction in the drop-out rate for pupils in the preparatory education cycle (iii) Reduction in the repetition rate for pupils in the elementary education cycle (iv) Reduction in the repetition rate for pupils in the preparatory education cycle (v) Increase in the pass rate of comprehensive State examinations of semi-professional vocational training in Jordan, the West Bank and Gaza
(b) Adapted and improved course content and curricula in both the general and technical education programmes to match developments in host countries	(b) Percentage of the curricula adapted or improved relative to the total number of modifications required
(c) Adapted and improved course content and curricula in vocational training institutions to meet changing market conditions	(c) Percentage of the curricula adapted or improved relative to the total number of modifications required

Strategy

21.8 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Supporting schools to ensure that each eligible Palestinian child has a place in school, where he or she receives quality education, and improving the services provided in vocational and technical training centres for better job opportunities;

(b) Maintaining an environment conducive to learning and meeting the needs arising from the natural growth in the refugee population through upgrading and construction of facilities and enhancing the skills and competencies of the Agency's teaching and training staff;

(c) Fostering work relationships with ministries of education in order to have ample time to respond to changes;

(d) Ensuring that equipment, tools and teaching aids are updated;

(e) Ensuring the maintenance of full gender parity in UNRWA schools and enhancing gender mainstreaming in UNRWA vocational training centres;

(f) Providing educational services to Palestine refugees in accordance with the needs of the refugees, their identity and cultural heritage and consistent with the standards of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Subprogramme 2
Health

Objective of the Organization: To meet the basic health needs of Palestine refugees and to improve the overall state of health of their community.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Reduced infant and maternal mortality from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth, with special emphasis on reduction of neonatal mortality	(a) (i) Increased percentage of infants delivered by trained personnel (ii) Increased percentage of pregnant women registered with health-care services
(b) Reduced morbidity, disability and mortality from communicable and non-communicable diseases	(b) (i) Maintenance of above 95 per cent immunization coverage rate against vaccine-preventable diseases (ii) Increased percentage of newly detected cases managed for non-communicable diseases
(c) Improved environmental sustainability in refugee camps and improvement of safe indoor water facilities	(c) (i) Increased percentage of camp refugee shelters connected to underground sewerage systems (ii) Increased percentage of camp refugee shelters provided with safe indoor water facilities, including potable water

Strategy

21.9 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Improving the quality and efficiency of the current services to achieve international standards;

(b) Focusing on the integration of the various elements of care within a primary health-care approach, with special emphasis on the reduction of risk factors and the management of high-risk groups;

(c) Expanding special programmes for the control of non-communicable diseases and the prevention and control of iron deficiency anaemia in order to improve the impact of these programmes on the health status of the target group;

(d) Addressing the underlying social and economic determinants of health through policies that protect the vulnerable and ensure that they have priority access to health care, and integrating a pro-poor, gender-responsive and human rights-based approach;

(e) Reducing the health consequences of emergencies, disasters, crises and conflicts, and minimizing their social and economic impact;

(f) Continuing investment in the training and development of health staff;

(g) Strengthening partnerships with stakeholders to help mobilize additional resources, increase efficiency and cost-effectiveness and avoid overlap.

Subprogramme 3
Relief and social services

Objective of the Organization: To provide the most disadvantaged Palestine refugees with humanitarian assistance, and promote self-reliance of less-advantaged members of the refugee community, especially women, the elderly, children, youth and persons with disabilities.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Improved social safety net provision for the lowest income refugee families	(a) (i) Increased percentage of shelters rehabilitated in relation to cumulative identified housing needs for special hardship cases
	(ii) Decreased percentage of assisted special hardship families who are living below the poverty line
	(iii) Decreased percentage of special hardship families receiving selective cash assistance compared with the total number of special hardship families

(b) Enhanced well-being of disadvantaged Palestine refugees	(b) (i) Increased number of individuals benefiting from loan products through the microcredit community support programme (ii) Increased number of persons with disabilities receiving direct rehabilitation from community-based rehabilitation centres (iii) Increased number of women benefiting from awareness-raising, skills training, and legal/social counselling

Strategy

21.10 The strategy in attaining the objective includes:

(a) Adopting an approach to alleviate poverty among the most vulnerable Palestine refugees;

(b) Strengthening the academic and technical abilities of relief and social services staff members, especially social workers and their immediate supervisors, to better identify the needs and responses of refugee families;

(c) Providing short-term humanitarian assistance in times of crisis to relieve the suffering of the worst affected individuals, families and communities;

(d) Ensuring that all registered refugee data are recorded in a web-based and up-to-date electronic database, which will also serve as the hub of an effective management information system for the Agency;

(e) Promoting and facilitating community-based action through community-based organizations that create social, cultural, economic or educational opportunities and provide services for women, the elderly, children, youth and persons with disabilities and their families;

(f) Promoting the institutional capacity of community-based organizations through technical and financial support;

(g) Promoting a community-based rehabilitation strategy for the creation, rehabilitation or equalization of opportunities and the social inclusion of all persons with disabilities;

(h) Mainstreaming a gender perspective as an integral part of all relief and social services plans, policies and programmes in order to achieve gender equality.

Subprogramme 4
Microfinance and microenterprise

Objective of the Organization: To improve the quality of life of small and microentrepreneurs, create and sustain jobs, decrease unemployment and provide income-generating opportunities for needy men and women through the provision of credit.

Expected accomplishments of the Secretariat	Indicators of achievement
(a) Increased business and income-generating opportunities	(a) (i) Increased value of loans disbursed
	(ii) Increased number of loans disbursed
(b) Improved development of the capacity of women microentrepreneurs	(b) (i) Increased number of loans provided to women-owned enterprises
	(ii) Increased value of outstanding balance on women's loans

Strategy

21.11 The strategy for attaining the objective includes the development of a range of self-sustaining credit products that are sufficiently comprehensive to meet the normal range of financial needs of microenterprise owners and Palestine refugee householders. The outreach of these products to the business and residential community will be provided through an expanding network of branch offices in each region to ensure that areas with significant Palestine refugee populations have access to the programme's loan products. Each branch office will be developed on the basis of institutional cost recovery and where the market is able to support self-sufficient credit operations.

Legislative mandates

General Assembly resolutions

302 (IV)	Assistance to Palestine refugees
3331 (XXIX)	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
61/112	Assistance to Palestine refugees
61/113	Persons displaced as a result of the June 1967 and subsequent hostilities
61/114	Operations of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East